

# SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021



## HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY IN IRAN

*US Senate Persian New Year Nowruz live virtual briefing*

**March 2021**



**Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ)**, *Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations;*

**Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD)**, *Member Senate Foreign Relations;*

**Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)**, *Member Foreign Relations, Armed Services Committee;*

**Senator Gary Peters (D-MI)**, *Chairman, Senate Homeland Security, Armed Services Committee;*

**Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL)**, *Ranking Member, Select Committee on Intelligence,  
Member Senate Foreign Relations;*

**Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX)**, *Member Senate Foreign Relations and Judiciary Committee;*

**Senator Todd Young (R-IN)**, *Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Near East, South Asia, Central Asia,  
and Counterterrorism of the Foreign Relations Committee;*

**Senator John Cornyn (R-TX)**, *Member, Select Committee on Intelligence and Judiciary Committee;*

**Senator John Boozman (R-AR)**, *Ranking Member, on Subcommittee Military Construction, Veterans Affairs,  
and Related Agencies on Appropriation Committee;*

**General James Jones, USMC (Ret.)**, *former National Security Advisor & Supreme Allied Commander in Europe;*

**Honorable Joseph Lieberman**, *former Senator from Connecticut;*

**Honorable Kelly Ayotte**, *former Senator from New Hampshire*

# SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021



## Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ)

Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations

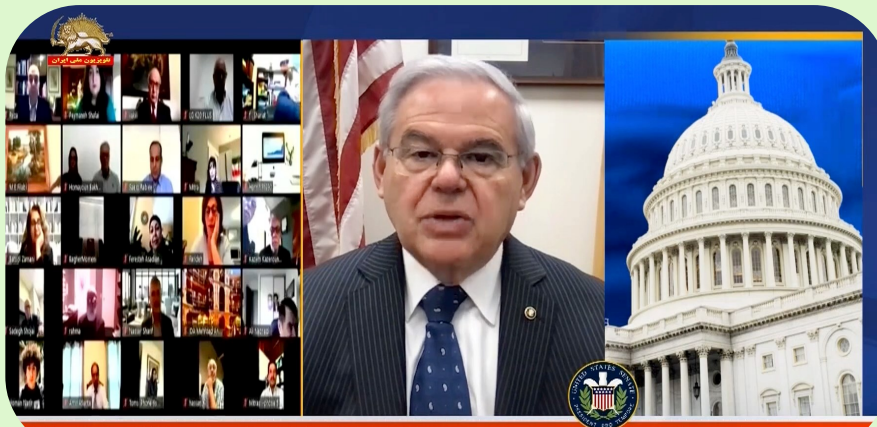
I am proud to have the opportunity to address your *community* who have been steadfast supporters of a free, democratic, Iran that is prosperous at home and at peace with its neighbors; an Iran that places more value on human rights than it does on its ability to pursue nuclear weapons. I'm glad to be joining you once again, to stand with the Iranian people as they continue to fight for their fundamental human rights and hold the Iranian regime accountable for its ongoing human rights abuses and support for terrorism.

As always, I'm pleased to see that you are joined today by many of your compatriots in Albania, your safety and security prove that dedicated advocacy and fighting for your cause can improve your situation and hope that all Iranian people may someday be able to live in safety, dignity, and freedom. Unfortunately, the Iranian regime continues to give us reason to doubt that future and to show the world that it has no intention of changing its oppressive and reprehensible behavior.

The regime in Tehran continues to try to silence those who dare to speak out as a voice for the voiceless. More broadly, we know the regime has tortured and imprisoned thousands for simply speaking out, for speaking against the abuses of the regime, for demanding economic justice, for simply wanting to live in peace and freedom, and to be able to work for a better future for their children.

We cannot be silent in the face of this kind of oppression. You know, that you have friends in Congress and throughout the U S government, as well as a host of international NGOs who will continue to shine a light on these abuses and continue to press for accountability. We will continue highlighting the plight of Iran's people at the regimes expense.

Over the past year, we've seen Iran prove again on the world stage that it is not interested in making peace with its neighbors or prioritizing the wellbeing of its people. Beyond its abuses of people at home, the regime continues to support terrorism and the brutal regime of Bashar al-Assad, and continues on its path towards a nuclear weapon.





## SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021

### SENATOR BEN CARDIN (D-MD)

Senior Member, Foreign Relations Committee

Iranian people have suffered under a regime that has routinely repressed its own people and violated human rights. We have seen the continued attempts to shut down Internet access and the ability of the Iranian citizens to freely and peacefully assemble. The Iranian regime continues to crack down on dissent. It detains human rights defenders and other prisoners of conscience and subjects them to unfair trials, torture and mistreatment, detention and death in custody. Picture is bleak in the spirit of Nowruz and celebrating a season of new life.



I am hopeful that brighter days are ahead. President Biden has committed to putting human rights at the center of us foreign policy. The Biden Harris administration is committed to a world in which human rights are protected. And those who commit human rights abuses are held accountable.

I am working, with the Biden Harris administration and my colleagues in the Senate to continue to hold Iran accountable. While there're, maybe some differing views on tactics, we all agree that Iran must never possess a nuclear weapon and Iranian support for human rights violations and terrorism must end. Just this week, my colleagues and I are sending a letter to president Biden reiterating our bipartisan concerns on this front.

During the previous Congress, I introduced a resolution that decried the Iranian government's violent crackdowns on protestors in which hundreds were killed and thousands arrested and support the rights of the people of Iran to determine their own future. I'll continue to work closely with my Senate colleagues during this Congress to identify effective ways to pressure the Iranian regime to change its behavior.

We need to use all the tools at our disposal, including targeted sanctions for the most egregious human rights violations. I've introduced legislation with Senator Wicker in this Congress reauthorizing and strengthening the Global Magnitsky act. This reauthorization will send a clear signal of our national commitment to defending democratic values and the international rules and standards that enable us all to live peacefully together. When human rights abusers violate norms, it is incumbent upon us to create concrete consequences.

My message to the Iranian people on this Nowruz is to know that America stands with you. We stand with you to engage legitimate protests against an oppressive corrupt regime. We support your rights to peacefully assemble without fear of persecution and violence. Whether in Iran or elsewhere, you have my commitment. You have America's commitment. Never give up hope.

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## SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN (D-NH)

Chair, Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

A lot has changed since we last saw each other in March of 2020, COVID-19 has forced us to adjust our way of life and find new ways to connect with each other. But many things have stayed the same. And that includes the continued fight for responsive and just government in Tehran because now more than ever respect for democracy and human rights must be a cornerstone of American foreign policy around the world.

We've seen leaders use the pandemic as an excuse to chip away at democratic rights and norms. The group gathered virtually today knows all too well the dangers of a government that is not responsive to the will of its people and firmly committed to human rights. In recent months, authorities in Iran have relied on internet blackouts to curb street protests.

They use this authoritarian tool to limit gatherings, to clamp down on information and prevent transparency. And earlier this month on international women's day, the UN released a report on human rights in Iran. It painted a very bleak picture.

Women and girls in Iran continue to be treated as second class citizens. Human rights advocates, ethnic minorities, journalists, and people with dual nationalities are targeted by the regime. They face abuse, torture, arbitrary, detention, harassment, and even death.

U.S. foreign policy must draw contrast with these actions. It's necessary that we support nascent democracies, that we bolster human rights and prioritize democratic movements over oppressive countries. So, this *Nowruz* we recommit to democracy and human rights at home and around the world.





# SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021

## Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL)

Ranking Member, Select Committee on Intelligence, Member Senate Foreign Relations

The brutal regime in Tehran violently represses the fundamental rights of the Iranian people, uses its money to export terrorism in the region and beyond, take Americans and other foreigners as hostage, and violates its international commitments.



Today, we reflect on the bravery of so many of Iranians who over the years took to the streets to protest the corrupt and evil regime. The Iranian people deserve a government that respects the rule of law, democratic norms, and places the needs of the Iranian people above funding its adventurism abroad.

I pray for the day that Iran is free and peace loving. Until that day comes, we will continue to do all we can to counter Iran's malign activities and stand up for the Iranian people. On behalf of the people of Florida, I extend my wishes to all virtually in attendance today as you mark the Iranians' ancient new year, Nowruz. I look forward to continuing to stand with the people of Iran in the years to come.



# SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021



## SENATOR TED CRUZ (R-TX)

Foreign Relations committee; committee on the Judiciary

I know that we are all deeply concerned about much of what is happening in Washington, DC regarding the Ayatollah Khamenei and the mullahs, the catastrophic Obama Iran, nuclear deal, reconnecting Iran to the global financial system while also flooding the Ayatollahs with hundreds of billions of dollars in sanctions relief, gifting them everything they needed to launder vast sums of money, across the world, for terrorism and proliferation.

I urged President Trump to withdraw from that disastrous deal. And he did so. Together, we made enormous progress pressuring the Iranian regime over the last several years, but you and I both fear we're headed into a dangerous chapter with the Biden Harris administration.

This administration has shown every sign that it intends to, and that it will, embrace and appease the Iranian regime. We are already seeing the sorry fruits of that appeasement in the form of constant attacks by Iran and its terror armies on American forces and our allies across the Middle East.

Just as Ronald Reagan brought down the Soviet Union with strategic strength and by boldly speaking truth, we likewise, must work to collapse the Iranian regime that oppresses its people, and that seeks to sow terror all over the world. I know this is possible and, not only that, it is necessary.

We will not be safe until the regime has fallen. When we're here talking about the future of Iran, it is my belief that we need to collapse the regime and with your help and with your leadership, we will.





## SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021

### SENATOR TODD YOUNG (R-IN)

RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EAST, SOUTH ASIA, CENTRAL ASIA, AND COUNTERTERRORISM, FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

For decades, the Iranian people have been demanding, a democratic peaceful, and non-nuclear republican government. And we in the United States government stand by their calls for freedom and condemn the Ayatollah and the Iranian regime's abuse of power, supporting terrorism, regional instability, the proliferation of weapons, cyber-attacks, and other

Last year, I stood with the people of Iran as they risked life and limb to demand freedom in the face of oppressive policies. In the 117th Congress, I've continued to voice my views and strongly denounced the Iranian regime and expressed my support for the economic sanctions that are weakening the regime's stranglehold on their people.

That's why I introduced the Iran sanctions relief review act of 2021, a bill that would enable Congress to approve or block any administration effort to suspend or terminate US sanctions against the Iranian regime. The United States must signal to our allies and partners in the region that we're firmly opposed to their malign activities and that we intend to negotiate from a position of strength today. I not only reiterate my message of support for the Iranian people, but I also stand in solidarity with their message condemning the regime's radical activities across the region. Thank you for inviting me to speak today. And I wish the Iranian American community a happy new year.



# SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021



## SENATOR GARY PETERS (D-MI)

CHAIRMAN, HOMELAND SECURITY & GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, MEMBERS, ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

I am proud to stand with the people of Iran in opposition to a totalitarian regime. For decades, the Iranian regime has been directly responsible for mass executions of political prisoners, violently suppressing, peaceful protest, and sham elections.

If the Iranian regime wants to re-engage with the world, it must give up the pursuit of nuclear weapons and its offensive missile program. The regime ruling Iran has lost legitimacy through its failure to abide by basic international obligations, to respect human rights and civil liberties.

Let me be very clear. All people deserve the right to choose their own government. And in the United States Senate, I will continue standing with the people of Iran who have never given up their pursuit for a democratic peaceful and non-nuclear republic.







# SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021

## SENATOR JOHN CORNYN (R-TX)

Select Committee on Intelligence;  
Committee on the Judiciary

Hi, I'm Texas Senator John Cornyn. I want to begin by wishing all of you a happy new year or Nowrouz Pirouz. And thank you for allowing me to speak with you today.

I want to commend your hard work and fighting for an Iran free of human rights abuse, and totalitarianism. America will always stand with the people of Iran and we'll do everything we can to support Iran's desire to be free. And as the mullah's regime in Iran continues to exert their iron will, we must hold them accountable by sustaining our sanctions against the regime.

We've got our work cut out for us, but I applaud all of you in the hard work you continue to do. So once again, thank you all for letting me join you today and have a wonderful new year.



# SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021



## SENATOR JOHN BOOZMAN (R-AR)

Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Military construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, Senate Appropriation Committee;

Having this event while we face unprecedented challenges, demonstrates your commitment to facilitating a better future for Iran. And I wish to share with you that I stand with the efforts of the Iranian people to bring change and democracy to the country that you all love.

The US remains committed to democracy, human rights, civil liberties, and the rule of law and supports the Iranian people in their calls for a democratic government that respects these rights and freedoms.

Like you, I'm the startled by the rising number of human rights violations in Iran. And I continue to believe that preventing the regime from developing a nuclear weapons program is critical.

Further, we must hold the regime accountable. That's why last month I joined my Senate colleagues to reaffirm the need for maintaining sanctions on the Iranian regime, until it abandons its nuclear ambitions and ends a through provoking violence and instability in the region.

The US must have these tools at its disposal to deal with Iran's transgressions. Removing sanctions will only embolden the regime and provide funding and support for its terrorist proxies in the Middle East. It would also empower them to suppress and exploit the people of Iran even more.



# SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021

March 17, 2021



## **MRS. MARYAM RAJAVI**

**PRESIDENT-ELECT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF RESISTANCE OF IRAN**

Ladies and gentlemen, Distinguished senators, Honorable guests,

On the brink of the Iranian New Year, Nowruz, I would like to express my gratitude and respect to all the United States senators, lawmakers, and personalities who have advocated for democracy and human rights in Iran over the years.

Today, I would like to draw your attention to the most important reality in Iran, which is the growing social desire to overthrow the religious dictatorship.

The great uprising of November 2019 brought the regime to the brink of its downfall. Explosive conditions, extreme discontent, and the confrontation between the people and the ruling regime, have reached their peak. There are now over 11 million unemployed people. 5.6 million have lost their jobs just in the past year due to the pandemic.

People who until recently enjoyed relative stability as part of the middle class have now joined the ranks of the poor. And the poor of yesterday are suffering from starvation today. Over the past year, the regime's supreme leader Khamenei has tried to use the coronavirus and its massive casualties as a shield of protection for the regime. He revealed his true objectives by banning vaccines from the U.S., Britain, and France.

But as the bloody uprising of the people of Baluchistan in the last week of February showed, the fire of the uprisings has risen from under the ashes of the coronavirus. Every day, the Iranian people are using every opportunity they get to make their voices heard.

# SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021



**MARYAM RAJAVI**  
**PRESIDENT-ELECT**  
**OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL**  
**OF RESISTANCE OF IRAN**

The people of Iran no longer tolerate life under the fundamentalist mullahs and have risen up to turn the pages of history. Iranian women no longer accept oppression, lack of respect for their rights, and being second-class citizens.

Ethnic and religious minorities no longer wait for the empty promises of the regime and are standing up for their rights. In unity with all the Iranian people, we want to establish a pluralistic republic based on human rights; A republic based on the separation of religion and state; instead of the ruling misogynist tyranny.

Dear friends,

A two-and-a-half-year investigation by the Antwerp court in Belgium revealed that the entire clerical regime has been involved in terrorism and the June 2018 terrorist plot in France.

The court convicted a regime diplomat and his agents on terrorism charges and sentenced them to long prison terms. While the regime pretends to support diplomacy, negotiation, and peace, its Foreign Ministry engages in planning and assisting terrorist activities in Europe and the United States against the regime's opponents.

Western governments must prevent this regime from abusing their countries' legal, diplomatic, banking and technological resources, or their democratic traditions to conduct terrorism. The position of the Iranian regime in 2021 is totally different than in 2015. The regime is now at its weakest point. But it wants to paint a completely different picture by threatening others.

In order to gain more concessions, the regime has tried to test the US government's resolve by stepping up rocket attacks and crimes in Iraq, Yemen and other countries in the region, and by further violating its nuclear commitments over the past two months. Any concessions to this regime or silence towards its crimes, will only embolden it to increase its threats more than ever before.

The only option is for the international community to show maximum resolve against this regime and to support the Iranian people in bringing down the regime and establishing a democratic government in Iran. US lawmakers have a key role to play in promoting the right policy on Iran.

And I thank all of you for being on the right side of the history. By removing the heart of fundamentalism and extremism, the free Iran of tomorrow will guarantee peace and security in the region and the world.



# SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021

## GENERAL JAMES JONES USMC (RET.)

Former National Security Advisor, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and Marine Corps Commandant

It is now a fact and people know that, the Iranian regime fears, the NCRI above all other organizations in terms of threat to the regime.

And they should! Because it is a, the NCRI is a combination of, many, many different factions of brave Iranian ex patriots who live for the day, where freedom and justice will be restored for all people of Iran.

Ambassador Lincoln, Bloomfield, has written several documents that speak to the truth of what is, and what isn't with regard to the MEK and the evolution of the NCRI. Too many people in our country that still listened to false narratives about the MEK. But fortunately, a large group of very distinguished Americans who have formed an unbreakable bond with Madam Rajavi and the people of the NCRI to continue the pressure that will hopefully lead to the day when the regime no longer exists and leaves one way or the other. And I do believe that that day is coming. I do believe that the sanctions that the United States has applied, are working. It is evident that the people in Iran are increasingly willing to take to the streets and to demonstrate their displeasure of having to live under this corrupt regime.



The United States, has a chance and this administration to do the right thing. We have a chance to maintain the sanctions. We have a chance to understand that this regime can never be trusted. They are going to pursue the development of nuclear weapons. They are going to continue to be the world's largest exporter of terror. They're going to continue to rule savagely over their own people. It will be a system that has no rule of law, no fairness, no equality, no justice.

That day is coming. And that will be a glorious day for the people of Iran, actually for the people of the world. Because once again, the huge Iranian human potential unleashed: its creativity, its intelligence, its science, its history shows that this country can be a fabulous free society living under democratic values that was expounded upon by Madam Rajavi, who has proven to be an exceptional leader of an exceptional people. We owe her and the people of the NCRI, our total support. We owe her the belief that, that the better days for Iran are coming and coming very soon. And we owe her our respect and admiration for the bravery that she has consistently shown over the last several years and will continue to show into the future.

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## HONORABLE JOE LIEBERMAN

Former Senator from Connecticut

We meet today, with a sense that this is a new day and part of why, we have come to this point is because of the visionary and inspired leadership of Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, and this movement of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, and the MEK inside Iran. Mrs. Rajavi, we thank you for your wonderful words to begin this gathering. I will tell you that, in my opinion, there is no more effective, visionary, principled, patriotic leader of the opposition, the resistance to the regime in Iran, than Mrs. Maryam Rajavi.

You have been the leader in the best sense of describing to people in Iran and outside, how terrible this regime is and how much better it could be with a government that really is by, and of, and for the people.

The government in Iran has never been weaker. The regime has never been weaker. Yes, it is suffering from the sanctions economically in the country. Its purpose, no matter what it says, is only to rid itself of those sanctions and then to go on with all of its evil behavior.

But there is something really more significant for us to focus on. And for the governments of the world to focus on, particularly our government of freedom and law here in the United States of America: the protests among the people of Iran that began in 2019, have continued and grown unabated in more than 200 cities, in Iran, large numbers of people continue to come out of every ethnic and religious group that make up Iran. As president Biden has said, lengthen and strengthen the agreement, those are two important words because

President Biden in using those words has acknowledged that the existing Iran nuclear agreement is too short. It's not really an end to the nuclear program or the other horrible behavior by the regime. It needs to be lengthened, and it needs to really to be strengthened to require not just the end of Iran's nuclear program, which, Ms. Rajavi and the NCRI have committed to, but to stop its abuse of the people, to stop its aggression in the region, to stop its support of terrorism in the region and throughout the world, and to stop its harassment of the NCRI.

So, I think the Biden administration eyes are open. It wants to progress, but it will not knuckle under gen-  
-flect to this irresponsible and threatening regime in Tehran. I've been urging the Biden administration to do two things, as it formulates a new policy for the regime in Iran, one is to build it on bipartisanship. And then the second part, which is really important, consistent with what president Biden has said about his foreign policy, he wants to get back into the world and he wants the United States to develop its foreign policy with its allies. There is no place that that is more important than in the middle East.



# SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021

## HONORABLE KELLY AYOTTE

Former Senator from New Hampshire

Let this be the year that freedom rings in Iran. And we know that there is an alternative to the tyranny of the mullahs, Madam Rajavi and the NCRI have a 10-point plan, which envisions a peaceful democratic future for the people of Iran. One where basic human rights are respected, and Iran is a peaceful non-nuclear state. The plan offered by the NCRI is one that would provide the Iranian people with peace and prosperity.

Unfortunately, the current Iranian regime continues to isolate the Iranian people. Iran is viewed as a pariah in the region. Many Muslim and Arab countries have formed alliances against the regime. Many have raised their voices against Iran, including the Shiite populations in Iraq and Lebanon who want Iran to stop interfering in their domestic politics. And the Mullahs are deeply unpopular at home. We have seen the Iranian people take to the street time and time again, over the last several years. Iran has failed its own people. It has failed to take care of the people when they have struggled with the COVID 19 endemic, in fact, Iran is probably the worst country hit in the middle East, but its own leaders failed to invest in its medical systems. They have covered up deaths in Iran and Iran's Supreme leader has actually banned Iran from receiving US and British vaccines that could save Iranian lives.

Let me just end by saying that with this Nowrouz, now is the time for the United States to have a bipartisan policy of continuing a maximum pressure campaign against the Iranian regime. We can do that through sanctions, through outreach, to our allies, by working together across the aisle. On behalf of the people who seek freedom in Iran and our own country, the Biden administration has an opportunity to renew bipartisan work in the Congress to stop Iran's malign behavior. We must work together to stop the danger posed by the Iranian regime to the world and to give the Iranian people the new day that they deserve governance that is based on freedom and respect for human rights.



# SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021



**DR. RAMESH SEPEHRRAD**

Chair of Advisory Board for OIAC

Welcome to Senate Nowruz event 2021,

On behalf of Iranian American communities, the broader network of 41 chapters of OIAC, I bring to you the warmest Nowruz wishes and hope for much brighter days ahead for the people of Iran.

Our warmest wishes for the brave men and women of every city and province most recently in Sistan and Baluchistan and all across Iran who continue to defy the regime's tyrannical rules. The celebration of Charshanbeh Souri last night, despite the intense security measures, is the latest example of popular and nationwide defiance of the people of Iran.

Ladies and gentleman, the bipartisan voice of US Senate spoke today on the following points:

The focus of Iran policy has gone beyond a narrow scope of the JCPOA even though the Iranian regime continues its defiance, its rocket attacks, and its hostage diplomacy to lift the sanctions, which is hurting the regime and the IRGC.

Members of the senate reiterated in a bi-partisan way that there is rising consensus to deal with other malign behavior of the Iranian regime and this includes: Iranian regime's ballistic missile program, regional meddling, state-sponsored terrorism around the globe, and its human rights violations inside Iran. They all expressed support for a free Iran.







## SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021



### Bi-Partisan Senators Call for Supporting Human Rights and Democracy in Iran

***Chairman Menendez, and Senators Cardin, Shaheen, Rubio, Cornyn, Cruz, Young, Boozman, and Chairman Peters call for supporting human rights and democracy in Iran***

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, March 19, 2021 /[EINPresswire.com](https://www.einpresswire.com/)/ -- Senior members of U.S. Senate committees on Foreign Relations, Armed Services, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Appropriations, and the Select Committee on Intelligence, joined prominent political figures at a briefing organized by the Organization of Iranian American Communities (OIAC) to discuss the fundamentals of an effective U.S. policy on Iran. The event, marking the Iranians' ancient new year, Nowruz, also addressed many aspects of Tehran's malign behavior at home and abroad, including abysmal human rights record, terrorism in the region and Europe, and systemic reliance on hostage diplomacy.

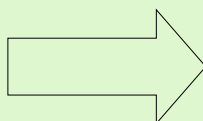
**President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) and event's keynote speaker, Mrs. Maryam Rajavi** pointed to explosive conditions in Iran and said, "The people of Iran no longer tolerate life under the fundamentalist mullahs and have risen up to turn the pages of history." Mrs. Rajavi contrasted the perilous state of the regime today with that of 2015 and noted, "Western governments must prevent this regime from abusing their countries' legal, diplomatic, banking and technological resources, or their democratic traditions to conduct terrorism."

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman, Robert Menendez (D-NJ)** told the conference that, "Over the past year, we've seen Iran prove again on the world stage that it is not interested in making peace with its neighbors or prioritizing the wellbeing of its people. Beyond its abuses of people at home, the regime continues to support terrorism and the brutal regime of Bashar al-Assad, and continues on its path towards a nuclear weapon."

Senator Menendez added, I am pleased that "you are joined by many of your compatriots in Albania, your safety and security prove that dedicated advocacy and fighting for your cause can improve your situation and hope that all Iranian people may someday be able to live in safety, dignity, and freedom."

Chairman Menendez assured the Iranian people, "you have friends in Congress and throughout the U S government, as well as a host of international NGOs," and stressed that the United States remains, "united against the regime's fundamental abuses against its citizens, oppressing and denying fundamental rights to women."

**Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD)**, Chairman of the Subcommittee on State Department and USAID Management, International Operations, and Bilateral International Development of Foreign Relations Committee pointed to the regime's abysmal human rights record and expressed hope that "brighter days are ahead" in Iran. He then added, "President Biden has committed to putting human rights at the center of U.S. foreign policy." The Biden-Harris administration, he mentioned, "is committed to a world in which human rights are protected. And those who commit human rights abuses are held accountable."



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The senior senator from Maryland then added, "I am working with the Biden Harris administration and my colleagues in the Senate to continue to hold Iran accountable.... we all agree that Iran must never possess a nuclear weapon and Iranian support for human rights violations and terrorism must end."

Senator Cardin also stressed, "We stand with you to engage legitimate protests against an oppressive corrupt regime. We support your rights to peacefully assemble without fear of persecution and violence. Whether in Iran or elsewhere, you have my commitment. You have America's commitment."

**Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)**, Chair of the Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation of the Foreign Relations Committee pointed to the plight of women and girls in Iran and reminded how they, "Continue to be treated as second class citizens. Human rights advocates, ethnic minorities, journalists, and people with dual nationalities are targeted by the regime. They face abuse, torture, arbitrary detention, harassment, and even death." She called for U.S. foreign policy to draw contrast with these actions and said, "It's necessary that we support nascent democracies, that we bolster human rights and prioritize democratic movements over oppressive countries."

In his remarks, **Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL)**, Ranking Member, Select Committee on Intelligence said, "the Iranian people deserve a government that respects the rule of law, democratic norms, and places the needs of the Iranian people above funding its adventurism abroad." Senator Rubio who is also a senior member of the Foreign Relations Committee added, "I pray for the day that Iran is free and peace loving. Until that day comes, we will continue to do all we can to counter Iran's malign activities and stand up for the Iranian people."

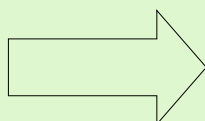
Foreign Relations Committee member, **Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX)**, called for the U.S. to address Iranian regime threat, "By strategic strength and by boldly speaking the truth, we likewise, must work to collapse the Iranian regime that oppresses its people, and that seeks to sow terror all over the world. I know this is possible and, not only that, it is necessary." He added that the free world, "will not be safe until the regime has fallen. When we're talking about the future of Iran, it is my belief that we need to collapse the regime and with your help and with your leadership, we will."

**Senator Todd Young (R-IN)**, the Ranking Member of the Senate Subcommittee on Near East, South Asia, Central Asia, and Counterterrorism of the Foreign Relations Committee condemned Ayatollahs' abuse of power and said, "Last year, I stood with the people of Iran as they risked their life and limb to demand freedom in the face of oppressive policies. In the 117th Congress, I've continued to voice my views and strongly denounced the Iranian regime and expressed my support for the economic sanctions that are weakening the regime's stranglehold on their people."

Chairman of the Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee,

**Senator Gary Peters (D-MI)** said, "The regime ruling Iran has lost legitimacy through its failure to abide by basic international obligations, to respect human rights and civil liberties." He made it clear that in the United States Senate, "I will continue standing with the people of Iran who have never given up their pursuit for a democratic peaceful and non-nuclear republic."

**Senator John Cornyn (R-TX)** who serves on the Select Committee on Intelligence and the Committee on the Judiciary emphasized the need to hold the mullahs' regime accountable, "by sustaining our sanctions against the regime."





## SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021

**Senator John Boozman (R-AR)**, Ranking Member, on Subcommittee Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies on Appropriation Committee said, “We must hold the regime accountable. That’s why last month, I joined my Senate colleagues to reaffirm the need for maintaining sanctions on the Iranian regime, until it abandons its nuclear ambitions and ends its role provoking violence and instability in the region”. He then added “The US must have these tools at its disposal to deal with Iran’s transgressions.” Removing sanctions, he added, “will only embolden the regime and provide funding and support for its terrorist proxies in the Middle East. It would also empower them to suppress and exploit the people of Iran even more.”

Other speakers included **General James Jones, USMC (Ret.), the former National Security Advisor and Supreme Allied Commander in Europe.** General Jones pointed to Iranian resistance leadership and said, “it is now a fact and people know that the Iranian regime fears the NCRI above all other organizations in terms of threat to the regime.” Because he added, “the NCRI is a combination of, many, many different factions of brave Iranian ex patriots who live for the day, where freedom and justice will be restored for all people of Iran.”

Former **Senator Joseph Lieberman** stressed the need to hold the clerical regime accountable particularly because, “The government in Iran has never been weaker.” He pointed to the widespread discontent and the 2019 protests across Iran and referenced its organized leadership. In my opinion he said, “there is no more effective, visionary, principled, patriotic leader of the opposition, the resistance to the regime in Iran, than Mrs. Maryam Rajavi.”

**Former Senator Kelly Ayotte** cited regime’s total mishandling of the COVID pandemic and said, “Iran has failed its own people. It has failed to take care of the people when they have struggled with the COVID 19 pandemic.” In contrast, she said, “we know that there is an alternative to the tyranny of the mullahs, Madam Rajavi and the NCRI have a 10-point plan, which envisions a peaceful democratic future for the people of Iran; One where basic human rights are respected, and Iran is a peaceful non-nuclear state. The plan offered by the NCRI is one that would provide the Iranian people with peace and prosperity.”



# SENATE BRIEFING ON IRAN, NOWRUZ 2021



## SENATE NOWRUZ ONLINE EVENT

HAPPY  
*Nowruz*

## HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY IN IRAN

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2021

COMPILED BY

**ORGANIZATION OF IRANIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES**

1717 PENNSYLVANIA AVE, N.W., SUITE 1025 WASHINGTON, DC 20006

PH: 202-559-9232

Twitter: @OrgIAC

[INFO@OIAC.ORG](mailto:INFO@OIAC.ORG)

[WWW.OIAC.ORG](http://WWW.OIAC.ORG)